

**Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)
Innovation (INN) Project #7:**

**Community-Defined Mental Wellness Practices
for the
African American/Black/African Descent Unhoused

Phase 1 Report**

MHSA Steering Committee Presentation 1/16/2025

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to the Sacramento County unhoused and at-risk community for welcoming us into your spaces and for generously sharing your invaluable input.

Thank you to our partners who hosted Focus Groups with our focus population:

- ▶ A Church For All
- ▶ CIBHS
- ▶ First Step Communities
- ▶ Greater Sacramento Urban League
- ▶ WEAVE, Inc.

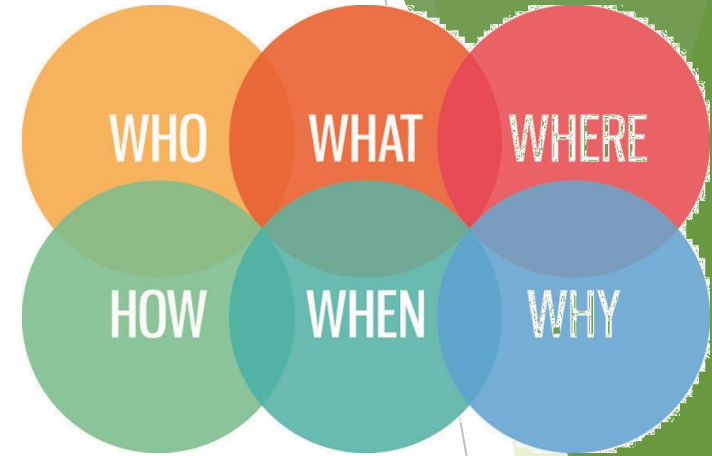
Thank you to the BHS employees who participated in the encampment outreach for this project

- ▶ JaQuay Butler
- ▶ Danielle Coughran
- ▶ Eva De La Cruz
- ▶ Neeki Gilani
- ▶ LaNita Hogue
- ▶ Tahirah Hudson
- ▶ Rexanne Irizarry
- ▶ Janel Reyes
- ▶ Leanna Sanchez
- ▶ Michael Sheridan
- ▶ Alondra Thompson
- ▶ Alex Trac

INN 7 –Project Phases



INN 7 – Phase 1



- Focus population defines:
 - Mental Health and Wellness
 - Effective strategies/practices that engage our unhoused population into mental health services that lead to mental wellness
 - Trusted community sites
- Expand the Peer Workforce

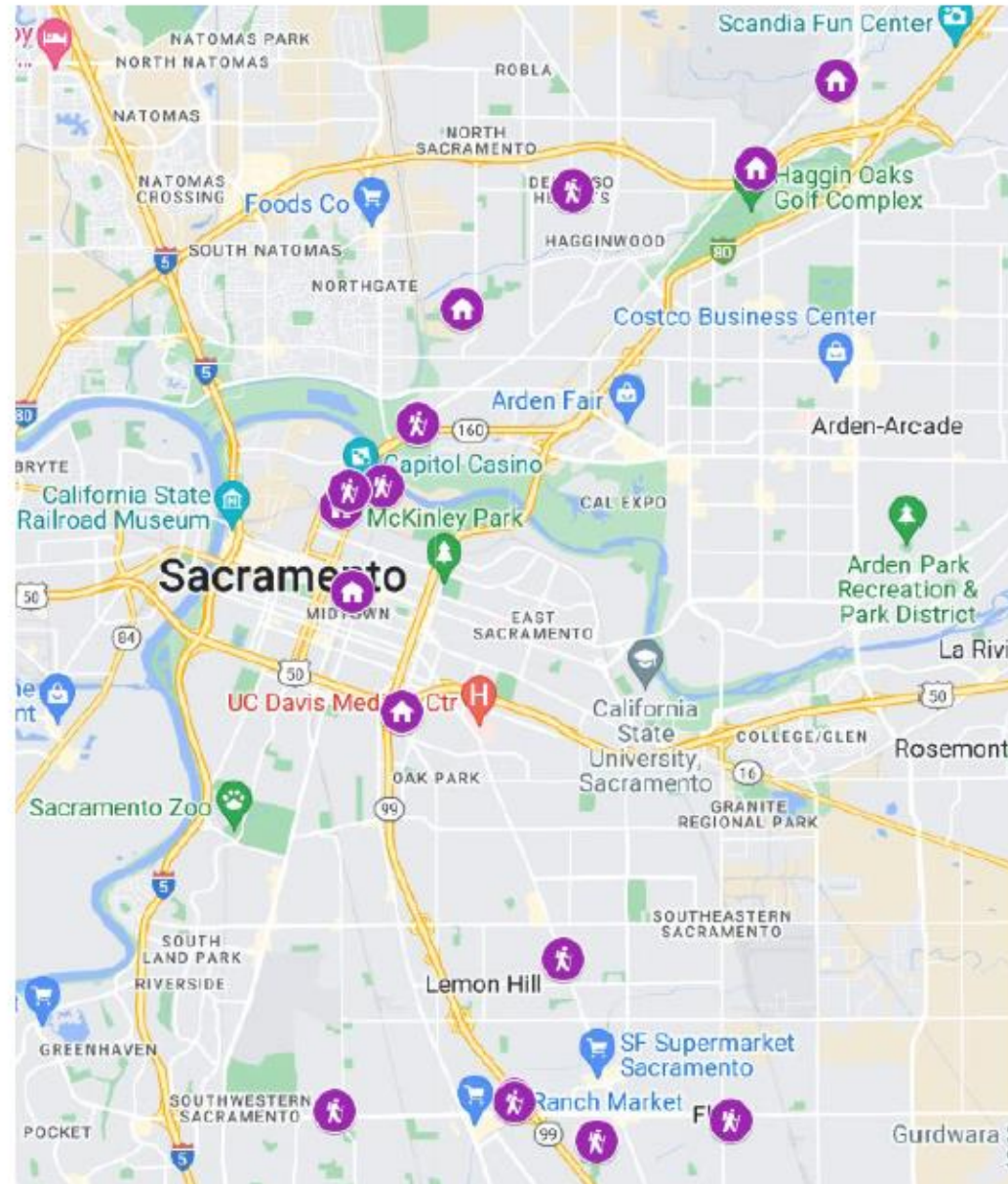
INN7 – Phase 1 Outreach

- ▶ Trusted Community Sites – Sponsored Focus Groups
 - ▶ 13 Focus Groups conducted
 - ▶ WEAVE, A Church for Us, Greater Sacramento Urban League, First Step Communities, and CIBHS
- ▶ Direct Outreach
 - ▶ 10 outings
 - ▶ Encampments, sidewalk outreach, and shelter visits
 - ▶ Incentive items included monthly bus passes, collapsible carts, solar chargers, dog supplies, and hygiene items



Some of the 150 collapsible carts line the hallway at the BHS office

The locations of the encampment outreach and the Focus Groups have purple markers on the map below.



INN7 – Phase 1 Questions

1. Please share some experiences with services that you found helpful or unhelpful.
2. The community has told us they prefer to be served by people who look like them and have similar life experiences. What do you think would help the AA/B/AD community build strength, peace, and mental well-being?
3. Is there anything that would make you more comfortable reaching out for mental wellness services?
4. Are there safe spaces for you where it would be helpful to add wellness services?
5. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

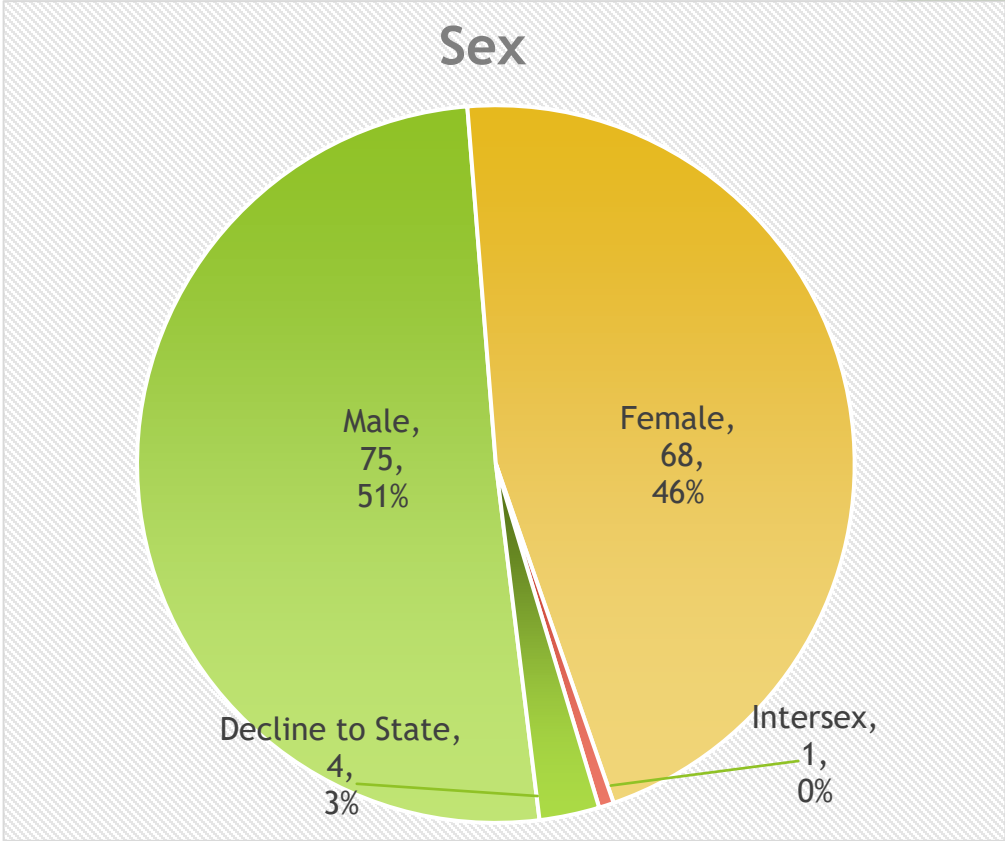
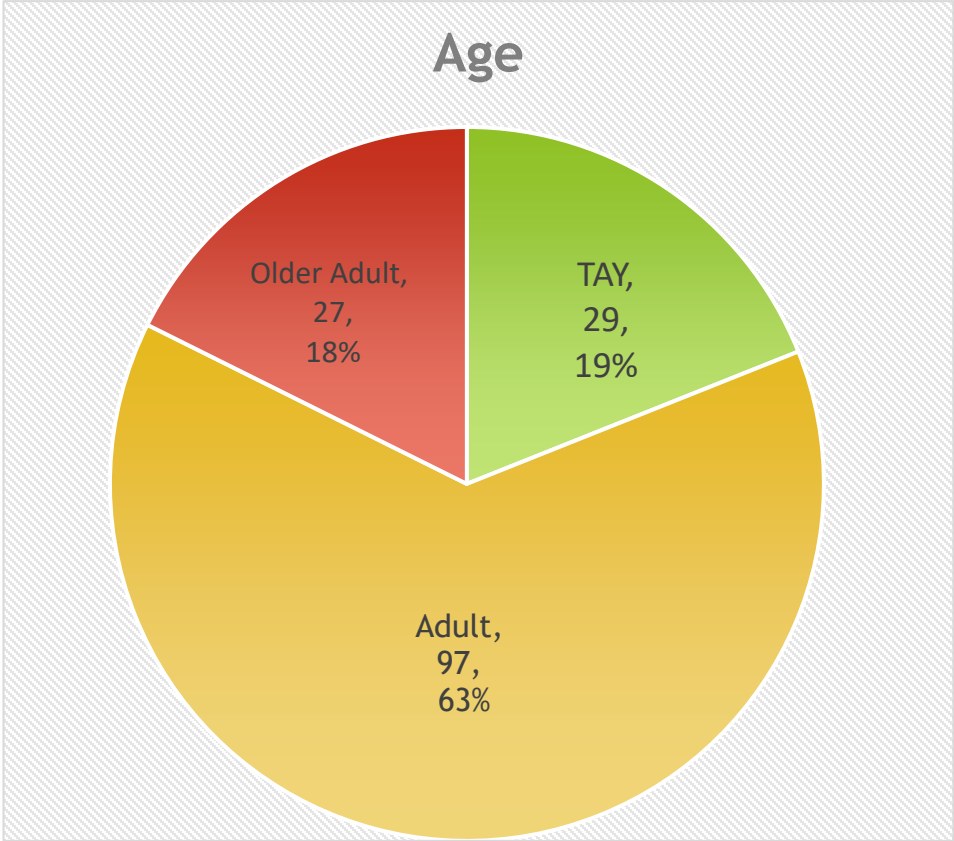
INN7 – Phase 1 Outreach - Summary

- ▶ 300+ individuals engaged
- ▶ 273 demographic surveys completed
- ▶ 154 demographic surveys collected from the AA/B/AD community



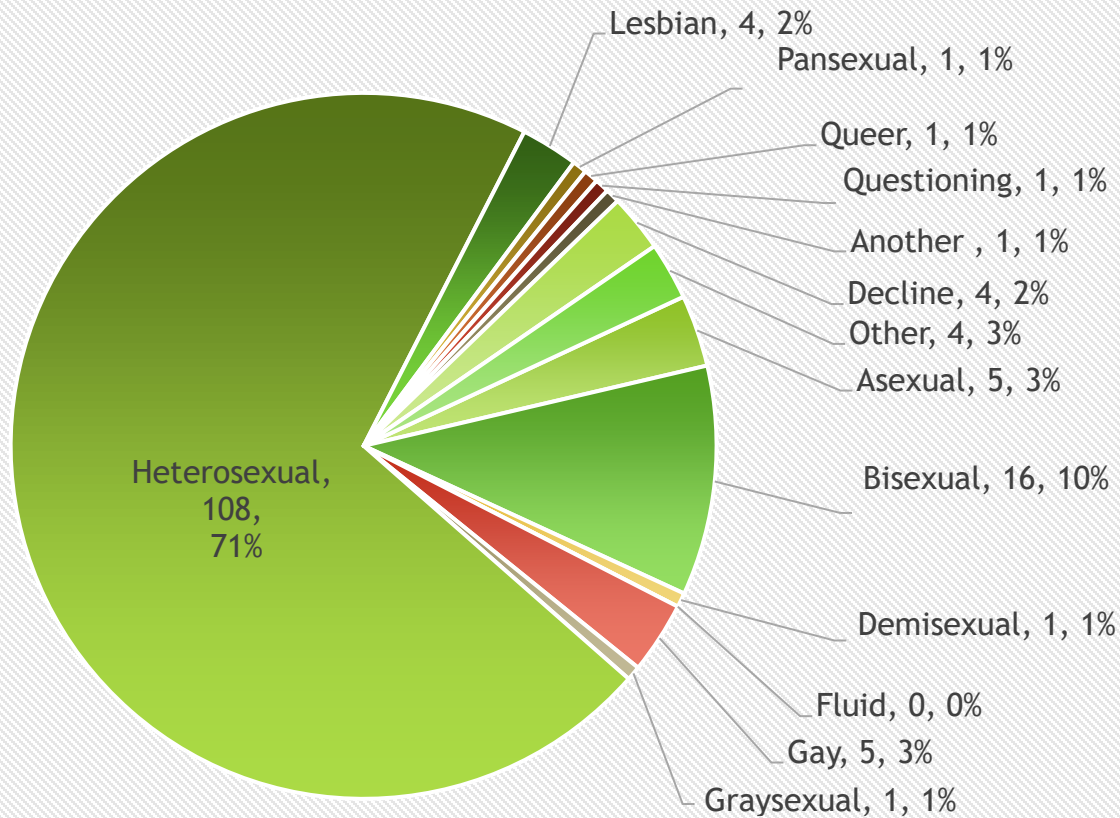
308lbs of dog food were handed out to the unhoused community

INN7 – Phase 1 Outreach - Demographics

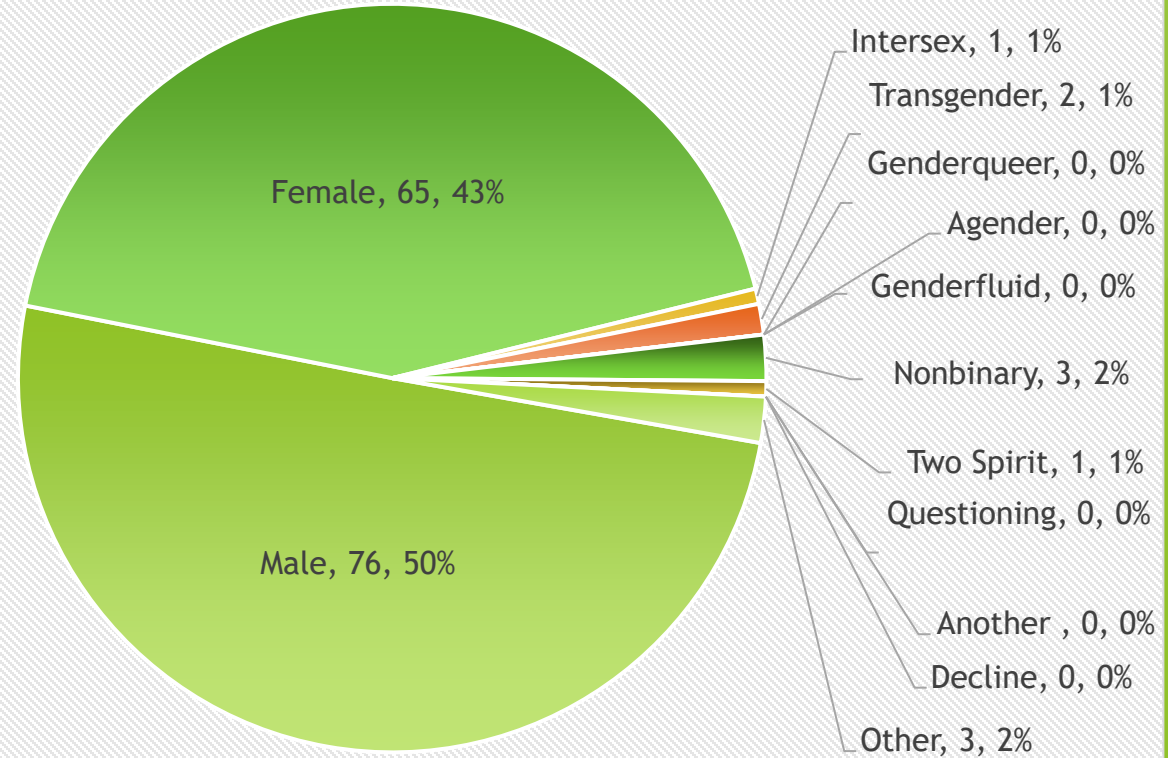


INN7 – Phase 1 Outreach - Demographics

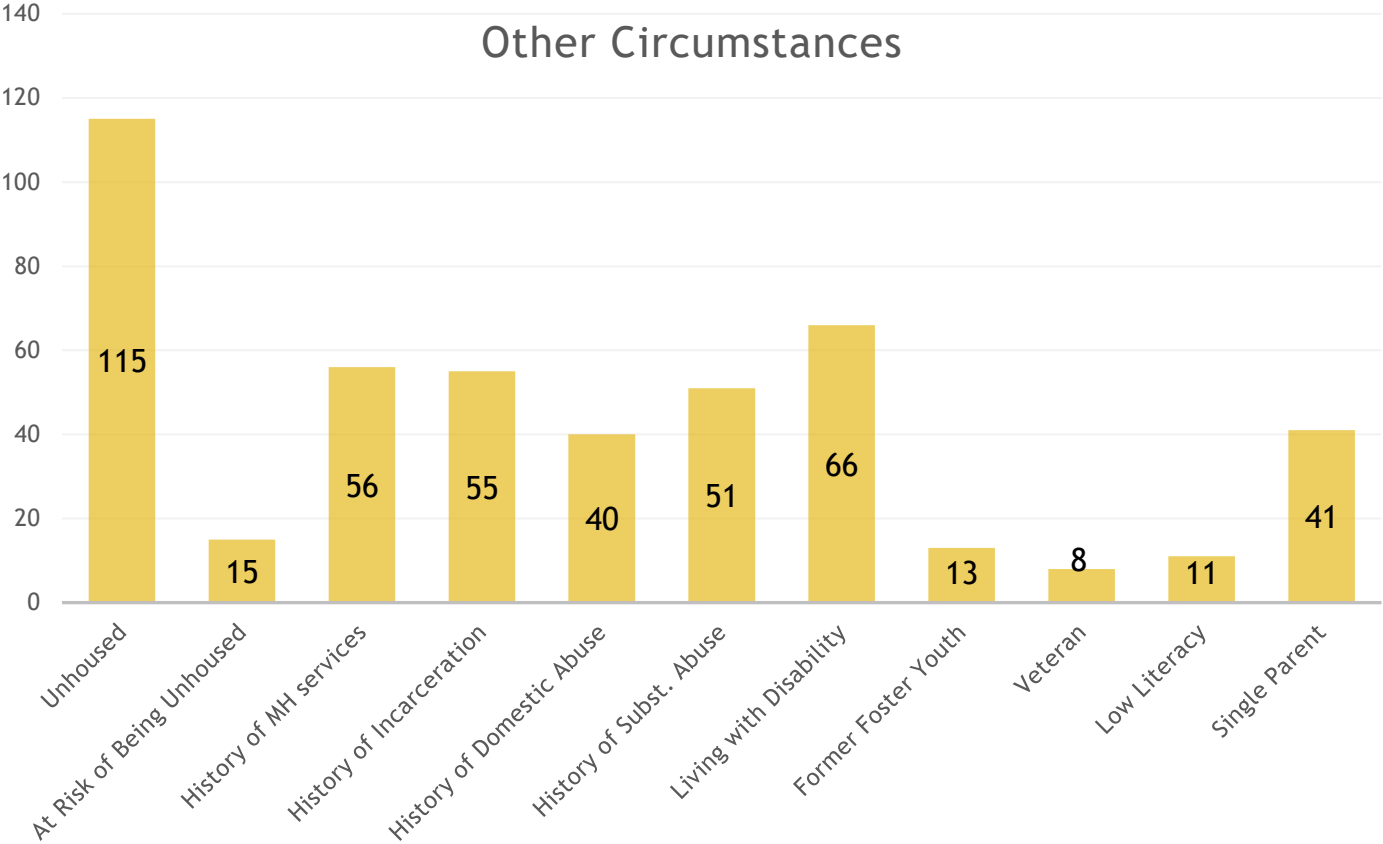
Sexual Orientation



Gender Identity



INN7 – Phase 1 Outreach - Demographics



INN7 – Phase 1 Findings – Summary

1. Current Experience
2. What is Missing?
3. Community Vision For The Future

Current Experiences

- Unhelpful Experiences
 - a. Lack resources/only waitlist
 - b. Did not follow through
 - c. The Help Is Not Enough - Needs Not Met
 - d. Negative Encounter With Staff
 - e. Distrust of system
 - f. Difficulty with Requirements/Rules
 - g. Systemic Racism/Stereotyping



Solar chargers that doubled as a flashlight were highly popular

What Is Missing?

- Barriers to Seeking Services
 - a. Transportation
 - b. Medical issues
 - c. Past trauma
 - d. MH, DV, and Substance Use
 - e. Trauma from being unhoused
 - f. Legal issues
 - g. Pets
 - h. Lack of Safety
 - i. Parents' distrust of system
 - j. Hesitant to Take Medication
 - k. Societal Racism and Stereotyping
 - l. Fear of Involuntary Commitment
 - m. Other Barriers



A resident at the Safe Stay takes his beloved dog for a ride in his new collapsible cart.

What Is Missing?

- ▶ Need more of:
 - a. Programs/Resources for all barriers
 - Employment
 - Housing
 - Medical
 - b. Positive interactions with the system
 - c. Follow Through
 - d. Existing resources are not known to the community/ Outreach



Sacramento County stickers were added to the hygiene kits distributed to participants

Community Vision for the Future

- Ideas/Requests From the Community
 - a. Community Fun/Safe Spaces/Respite
 - b. Bring Services to Encampment/ People Are.
 - c. Service ideas
 - d. Mentorship/Peer Training
 - e. One-on-One support
 - f. Offer Incentives
 - g. Resources for Pets
 - h. Diversity
 - i. Other Ideas



MHSA Program Planners Alex Trac and JaQuay Butler set up a table at a local encampment

Community Vision for the Future

- Battling Stigma
 1. Community Education
 2. Ensure Confidentiality
 3. Need for Community that is Supportive of Mental Health

Community Vision for the Future

- Appearance and Life Experiences
 - Support for Peer Support Specialists



**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**

Community Vision for the Future

- Safe spaces

- 25% said that they did not have a safe space
- 25% said they only feel safe in their tent, parks, etc.
- Fewer than half of participants name an organization as a safe space



Community Vision for the Future

- **Helping Each Other**
- There were many quotes from participants that showed deep care for others in their community.
 - *“I was recently set up with a place of my own. There are unhoused people everywhere. I want to feed the people outside my place, but I just don’t have the means.”*

Next Steps

- ▶ RFP/RFA process started